

THE STUDY OF MAN

BOLSHEVIK MAN, HIS MOTIVATIONS

A Psychoanalytic Key to Communist Behavior

DANIEL BELL

DURING the early truce talks in Korea, American negotiators, headed by Admiral Joy, were equipped with a slim book which they used (almost like a manual on bridge strategy) to assess Communist tactics. A presumed problem: "If the Communists make a concession on procedure, should we in turn make a concession, or is this only a bluff to test our trumps?" The book was Nathan Leites's *Operational Code of the Politburo* (1951), a study undertaken for Project Rand, a research organization* subsidized by the Air Force which recruited some of the best mathematical and social science brains in the country. In a field where there is so much uncertainty, this reliance on a social science document was either a remarkable tribute to Leites's findings, or a reflection on the Amer-

IN Nathan Leites's monumental volume *A Study of Bolshevism* (The Free Press, 639 pp., \$6.50), an effort is made, through the insights of psychoanalysis, as well as by other more conventional methods, to assess the character and motivations of the Bolshevik—that new man who haunts our age—in such a way as to offer practical guidance for the enormous political and military problems that the free world must face. DANIEL BELL here outlines Leites's analysis and offers a judgment of the validity of its point of view and of its possible usefulness as a guide to action in the cold war. Mr. Bell, lecturer in sociology at Columbia University and an associate editor of *Fortune*, has long been a student of Marxist thought. His monograph on the American left, published in 1952 by Princeton University Press in *Socialism and American Life*, is being revised and expanded for separate publication by Doubleday and Company in 1955.

ican character with its hope of obtaining the right "know-how" for every problem.

But the publication of the Operational Code was unfair to Leites—unfair both to his findings and to his method. The code was part of a larger study, and its publication as a fragment, with such terse, epigrammatic sentences as "The Party must not take the course of least resistance" made it seem like a handbook of Clausewitzian maxims. Few books, especially in politics, read well in schematic summary. A political generalization raised to the nth power can rarely hope to be more than a platitude. (Apart from the neat literary metaphor, what for example does Machiavelli's maxim that a prince should know how to use both beast and man, and in acting the beast be both fox and lion, truly mean?) And no serious political theory can be reduced to a "handbook."

In the recently published *A Study of Bolshevism*, Leites now presents his analysis of Communist behavior in all its necessary complexity. This massive volume is on one level a codification of Bolshevik precepts of political strategy; but it is much more than that. On a second level, it can be seen as a history of the changing moral temper of the Russian intelligentsia; but it is more than that, too. For both these aspects of the study are skillfully made to serve its final and most ambitious purpose: a psychoanalytic interpretation of political behavior, offering a definition of the "Bolshevik character" as a type distinct in social history. On all its levels, the book's method is to search for

*Rand now also does independent work under foundation grants. Work for the Air Force, which initiated the organization, is published as "Project Rand"; independent work is issued by the Rand Corporation.

"clues," seeking to isolate from a mass of material those recurrent elements of behavior and ideas which seem to illuminate the large historical and political forces as an individual's chance gestures and speech may illuminate the real forces of his character. What these "clues" lead to is an effort at a *complete* character definition of Bolshevik leadership.

ON THE one level, the codification of Bolshevik strategy, drawn largely from Bolshevik writings plus a fascinating assortment from pre-Soviet Russian intellectuals, is similar to a Mishnah which combines like precepts from different sections of the Pentateuch and groups them under common headings. And like the Mishnah, it is not a compilation of theological ideas (in this instance, say, the nationalities question, collectivization, the structure of the party, etc.), but an explication of rules of conduct. For Bolshevism is not only an ideology but an organizational code and manual; and the study of its norms of behavior defines the character of the men who are guided by these rules.

The attempt to define historic character is not unique. We have the image, somewhat overworked these days, of the "inner-directed Protestant" with his code of work, of the Puritan and his ascetic mode, the Elizabethan man with robust appetites, the Junker with his code of honor, etc. What makes Leites's work unique are the novel categories he chooses, and, above all, his method.

There is no observation of behavior. Like Max Weber, who drew his "Protestant ethic" from the writings of Luther, Calvin, Baxter, and others, Leites scans the writings of Lenin and Stalin to infer similar norms which guide the Bolshevik party. Bolshevism, Leites argues, has a characteristic stance, and a rigid one: seeking first to define this stance, he deduces a pattern of habitual actions from which, in his view, we should be able to predict typical Bolshevik responses to typical situations.

Leites reads the Bolshevik character as a "reaction" to the Oblomovs who slept away their lives; to the Rudins, the high-flown talkers but never doers; to the indecisive, soul-sick, moody students. The Bolshevik, as Boris Pilnyak put it, is against "the old peasant roots of our old Russian history, against its aimlessness, its non-teleological character . . . against the philosophy of Tolstoy's *Karataev*." The moral training of the Russian intelligentsia stressed both the pro-

hibition against egotism and the prohibition against "dirtying oneself." Chekhov said once, "If the Socialists are going to exploit the cholera for their own ends, I shall despise them. . . ." But for the Bolshevik, refusal to use bad means is merely an expression of sentimentality and stupidity—in Bolshevik doctrine the worst egotist is precisely he who refuses to soil himself. The party strives for humanity, and "purity" lies not in a personal refusal to act immorally but in dedication to the party. In such dedication the individual finds his defense against both egotism and personal impurity.

In contrast to the Russian intelligentsia who spoke of ultimate things and sacred values, the Bolsheviks maintain silence about the sacred. Against the vice of outpouring emotion, the Bolsheviks uphold the virtue of reserve. Against the older Russian tendency to depressed passivity, introspection, nervous impressionability and excited babbling, against the protracted searchings for metaphysical truths and the posing of unanswerable questions—against all these, there is the determinism of history, the certainty of purpose, the reserve, the commitment to action, the control, the ability not to take personal offense, the "masculinity" of action. Against the fear of a life with nothing to strive for, a life filled with uncontrollable, impulsive gratifications which arouse anxiety and guilt and thus lead to the famous Russian flirtation with death—Gorky tells the story of his youth when boys would lie immobile on the railroad track while trains passed over them—against this there are the constant goals of work and the party. Death is merely the point at which one has outlived one's *usefulness*. Of the suicide of Marx's grandson Lafargue, Lenin wrote: ". . . if one cannot work for the party any longer, one must be able to look truth in the face and die like the Lafargues."

OUT of such elements of ethics and moral temper there emerges in Leites's view the "operational code in politics."

For Bolshevism, all politics is summed up in the formula *kto kovo*, literally "who-whom," but in its most radical sense: *who kills whom*. Political relations are between dominators and dominated, between users and used. There can be no neutrals. To be one of the used is ultimately to be annihilated. All spontaneity is a danger because elation or excitement or any uncalculated act may lead to loss of control and thus to being used. Full "consciousness,"

control, rigidity become the political mode. This does not mean that Russians are automations (though Gromyko at times may seem to be one), but that their moods—their anger, rage, pity, gallantry (Malenkov picking flowers for Edith Summerskill)—are “instrumental.” Nor does it mean that each act is calculated or contrived, but that in the integration of the personality all actions tend to be *patterned*; in a sense, one might say that the Bolshevik spontaneously acts in an unspontaneous and premeditated way.

If politics is *kto kovo*, then all political strategies are guided by this fundamental rule: one pushes to the limit, one refuses to be provoked, one acts when one is ready. Stated in these gross terms, the precepts become political commonplaces, akin to the generalized precepts of military strategists or the maxims of Machiavelli. What gives Leites's analysis its special point and quality is the nuances of detail: Bolshevik use of procedural points for trading; the expectations that personal insults will be taken politically and not personally (Vishinsky contemptuously calls Romulo an empty barrel in the UN General Assembly, and then sends roses to a reception at Romulo's home); the role of provocations, etc.

Is “Bolshevik” character the same as it was fifty years ago? In important respects yes—Leites believes that there are certain invariant patterns. Before 1917, Bolshevism as a small party faced a hostile state; now, in its view, it faces a hostile world—its basic posture remains. Prerevolutionary behavior toward rival political organizations once displayed itself in small cafés and drafty meeting halls; now its scene is the great assembly halls of world politics: the same behavior repeats itself. The preoccupation with procedural issues—arising from the belief that a small point will “inevitably” grow into a big one and must not be conceded—which was displayed by Lenin on the constitution of the editorial board of *Iskra* in 1900 (when he was “co-existing” with rival Social Democrats), is duplicated in intra-party disputes in 1921, and again at international negotiations at Yalta, San Francisco, and the conference of foreign ministers in 1945.

This same rigidity and calculatedness of behavior the Bolsheviks ascribe to their adversaries. The “big bourgeoisie” are seen as the Bolsheviks see themselves—i.e., as *serious*, calculating men who, wielding power, obey the “laws” of power. Political acts are not accidental;

any act of the opposing ruling class (“Why at this time, comrades. . .”) can only be a hostile move in the constant war whose final outcome must be the annihilation of one side or the other. For the petty bourgeoisie, on the other hand, particularly the liberals, the Bolsheviks have only deep contempt; they are sentimental, given to illusions, deceived by the content of ideologies, moralistic, in short, fundamentally *unserious*.

The political consequence of this analysis is inescapable: if politics is *kto kovo*, then “co-existence” as a sustained *modus vivendi* is impossible. Leites sums it up flatly: “. . . a ‘settlement’ in Western terms, with outside groups—an agreement sharply and indefinitely reducing the threat of mutual annihilation—is inconceivable, [although] agreements with them, codifying the momentary relationship of forces, must always be considered and often concluded.” But the party “maintains a full awareness of the basic conflict,” and at the strategic moment presses forward again. Promises, as Lenin said, are like pie crusts, “made to be broken.”

II

BUT let us now look more closely at Leites's use of psychoanalysis, for the true novelty of his book lies there.

To say, as Leites does, that the sources of Bolshevik character lie in a reaction to the extreme temper of the Russian intelligentsia in the 19th century, is still to write history without the help of Freud; Lenin and his co-workers were perfectly *conscious* of their attempts to reverse traditional patterns of Russian character, to overcome Karataev and Oblomov. But when Leites speaks of the Bolshevik character as a “reaction formation” to *unconscious*, overwhelmingly powerful wishes, he is approaching politics in a way that was impossible before psychoanalysis.

Two principal drives, according to Leites, explain Russian intellectual character. These are a preoccupation with death and latent passive homosexual impulses. The Russian intellectual displayed a fascination with death that is terrifying to the Bolshevik. Against that fascination, the Bolshevik defense is to minimize death by work and, more important, to express a kind of personal omnipotence through the dissolution of the self into the all-embracing, undying party. Thus, Leites writes, “the earlier Russian feeling that life is empty because of death has been replaced by the Bolshevik feel-

ing that death is empty and small and unable to interfere with life."

The code of work becomes all-important. Krupskaya, Lenin's wife, tells of the time in exile when Lenin was absorbed for hours in playing chess. "On his return to Russia Vladimir Ilyich abandoned chess-playing. 'Chess gets hold of you too much, and hinders work . . . ' [he said]. From his early youth," she continues, "Vladimir Ilyich was capable of giving up whatever activity hindered his main work." In exile, many political refugees went often to the cinema, while others, scorning this mode of enjoyment, preferred to take physical exercise in walking. The group divided, said Krupskaya, into cinemists and anti-cinemists who were jokingly called anti-Semites. "Volodya," wrote Krupskaya to Lenin's mother, "is a decided anti-cinemist and a fierce walker."

The theme of latent homosexuality, lying deep in the arcanum of psychoanalysis, is seen as a pervasive yet repressed element of Russian intellectual desire. In Dostoevsky, the utmost demonstration of emotion by the usually overwrought and emotionally charged characters is to embrace and clasp each other. To Bolshevism, the fantasy of men embracing each other is repulsive and frightening. When Lenin described those once close to him who had now made common cause with his enemies, he would say that they "kissed" and "embraced" each other. ("The Scheidemannites kiss and embrace Kautsky."—"The followers of Bernstein are impudently blowing kisses to [Plekhanov].")

To Leites, a further significant clue is in the number of Lenin's intimate friendships which ended in violent ruptures. These include Struve, a close collaborator in the 1890's; Potresev, an early *Iskra* associate; Plekhanov, Lenin's "ambivalently loved master" who "capitulated" to the Mensheviks; Aleksinsky, perhaps Lenin's most intimate associate in the years after 1905, who later denounced him as a German agent; and Malinovsky, the Bolshevik whip in the Duma, of whom Lenin said, "he will not be another Aleksinsky," and who turned out to be a police agent.

"One might speculate," says Leites, "—the data discussed here allow no more than that—whether the Bolshevik insistence on, in effect, killing enemies and being killed by them is not in part an effort to ward off fear-laden and guilty wishes to embrace men and be embraced by them. This hypothesis is consistent with the existence of certain pervasive Bolshevik trends

described in this study: the fear of being passive, the fear of being controlled and used, the fear of wanting to submit to an attack. Once one denies one's wish to kiss by affirming one's wish to kill, this is apt to reinforce one's belief in the enemy's wish to kill by virtue of the mechanism of projection, probably heavily used by the Bolsheviks."

ON THE basis of what documentation can one make such sweeping inferences? Even if we fully accept the psychoanalytic theories, how does one validate these judgments without putting the Bolshevik leaders on the couch, so to speak? Leites's method is to examine the imagery, fantasy, and characteristic literary metaphors employed by Bolshevik leaders, and the fictional models in Russian literature with which the Bolsheviks identify, or those they assail. Russian literature, and the Russian's attitude to it, seems to make this possible. In few cultures do fictional characters become such sharply defined national types: Dostoevsky's gallery—the Karamazovs, Raskolnikov, Myshkin, Verkhovensky; Turgenev's Rudin, Gogol's Chichikov, Goncharov's Oblomov, Chekhov's multifarious characters—are models who are accepted or rejected by Russians as psychological masks. (Less easily and much less intensely and completely we accept or reject Hemingway's characters, Fitzgerald's youths, the cowboy, Huck Finn, the gangster, Horatio Alger's heroes, as American types, bodying forth aspects of our national character.) The Bolsheviks, as Leites points out, cite these types in their own speech and homiletics with great frequency and emphasis (e.g., "Oblomovism" as a disease the party must avoid).

In addition to these literary sources, Leites draws on Freudian theory to highlight the latent meanings of specific imagery. For example, fear of impotence, fear of being beaten (in Stalin's famous speech to the managers of Soviet industry in 1931, the image of beating or being beaten occurs eleven times in a single paragraph), fear of contamination, of embraces, of annihilation, jokes about "cleaning out" the party, fear of being used as a "tail," etc.

As chief evidence for his theories Leites relies on the marshaling of images, in a vast profusion. The result is a strange and fascinating medley of quotations—roughly three thousand quotations cited for various points.

This method of analysis immediately provokes a charge of "reductivism," namely, that

all ideas are seen as being "really" something more primitive. Thus, Lenin's fierce attack on solipsism is seen as expressing panic about annihilation, while his attack on the "spontaneity of the masses" is seen as a defense against desires for impulsive, orgiastic gratification. In what sense, one may ask, is the primitive impulse behind an idea more "real" than the idea itself?

This is a difficulty one encounters in much psychoanalytic thinking. It is true that the psychological impulse behind an idea is no test of its truth; the test of truth comes *after* the idea has originated. Yet we have learned not to scoff at these hidden mainsprings, for we are dealing less with the ideas than the way in which they are held and used. What Leites is arguing is that any view held with stubbornness, exaggeration, and intensity—as all Communist views are held—and which violently rejects all rational tests, raises the presumption that it may constitute a defense against strong unconscious wishes or fears which stand in contradiction to the idea. To follow a pronouncedly masculine profession like soldiering does not label a man as a "latent homosexual"; but if we find him compulsively, violently, and beyond reason insisting on his military postures, "common sense" permits us to suspect that he may be afraid of being less a man than he would like to appear. Again, this does not mean he may not be a good soldier; and the possibility that the Bolshevik stance may express a fear of passivity does not lead one to conclude that the Bolsheviks are "really" passive—obviously quite the contrary, they are dangerously aggressive. But a knowledge of the springs of their aggressions might conceivably help us to deal with them.

III

GRANTING, however, the validity of the psychoanalytic method in the study of personality, we must still ask whether it can legitimately be extended into the analysis of politics.

Erich Fromm has argued, in *Escape from Freedom*, that the sado-masochistic character, typical of the German middle class, found an outlet in the Nazi party. T. W. Adorno and his associate authors of *The Authoritarian Personality* have pointed to the rigid, compulsive individuals who seek authoritarian values. Harold Lasswell in the early *Psychopathology and Politics* sought to show how the political arena acts as a displacement of personal needs. (For

example, adolescents, guilty about sex strivings, find sublimation in the generalized "love" appeal of political movements that emphasize brotherhood.) In these studies, characteristic of modern social science, the social structure is taken as fundamental and the personality components are seen as the responses.*

Leites's view, however, goes beyond this. It says, in effect, that *character determines politics*. Since the mainspring of Bolshevism is action, the movement, by impressing its character on others, transforms all politics and, in the end, the social structure itself as well. (Compare the purposeful Bolshevik-type organization with interest-group parties, or tepid ideological parties, to see the difference.) Bolshevism, in this sense, can be considered as one of the few successful movements of pure will in history; its only competitors in this respect are certain religious orders.

Because, in modern life, ideas (abstract, philosophical conceptions of truth) have become transformed into ideologies (active strivings to implement a creed as truth), Leites's type of analysis is possible, reflecting as it does social reality. For ideologies are, in effect, attempts to unite ideas, behavior, and character. The Communist (or the fascist, or the kibbutznik, or the 100 per cent American) is not only supposed to believe certain things, and not only supposed to do certain things: he is supposed to *be* something.† If one is "serious," one "lives" one's ideology. Thus ideology may be said to presuppose character.

*The effort to construct "social character" out of unconscious strivings is not limited to psychoanalysis. It is central, for example, to Pareto's sociology. For Pareto, the springs of social action were "interests" (or rational assessments), "derivations" (or rationalizations), and "residues" (or fundamental drives). Different people are characterized by different "combinations of residues." As George Homans, an early follower of Pareto, writes: "American historians are given to discussing at length the 'Pioneer character,' the 'Pioneer spirit.' What they are talking about when they are simply not romancing is the prominence in the 'pioneers' of certain residues, notably those of the integrity of the individual."

†This helps to explain the narrow intensity with which a few ex-Communists have come to regard the problem of Communism. Though free of Communism, they are not free of ideology, and having once understood that a commitment to Communism demands a rigidly defined personal character, they now tend to believe that "real" anti-Communism demands an equally rigid personality pattern.

BUT again, what basically determines character? The standard socialist and utopian answer, as given, say, by Robert Owen in his *New View of Society* or by Edward Bellamy in *Looking Backward*, was that environment bred character: e.g., the rapacious nature of capitalism shaped the competitive character ("Withdraw those circumstances to create crime in the human character and crime will not be created," said Owen in a classic phrasing of the liberal belief); in the utopian society, where abundance prevailed, a different character would emerge.

What determined Bolshevik character? Leites in the present volume stops short of an answer to this question, possibly because the purpose of his book lies elsewhere—he is interested in describing the pattern of Bolshevik action, in order to develop a practical way of counteracting Communism. Whether his picture of this operational code is a true one is, he argues, independent of the origins of Bolshevik impulses. Formally he is correct, for the code's validity depends upon its internal consistency, upon its confirmation by other analysts using the same data, and finally on its usefulness in making predictions. Yet, intellectually the sources of that code remain interesting and important, for only by seeking to trace them can we have a complete model of social analysis.

The conventional answer regarding Bolshevik character is that the conspiratorial nature of the conditions of underground work in the days before the revolution—the environment—shaped the peculiar structure of the Bolshevik elite, and its unique code and discipline. But there were other parties, Marxist and social-revolutionary, which operated in the same environment. And the ideological debates between Lenin and Martov in 1903 on the nature of party membership antedated the development of "party work": Martov argued that a Social Democrat was one who sympathized generally with the party's program, while Lenin argued that only a professional revolutionary, only a conspirator, could be a party member. Thus the pattern was pre-figured in the thinking of Lenin. Leites, it seems to me, would be forced to argue that the Bolshevik pattern was a product of will. Further, if consistent with the psychoanalytic approach, he would have to argue that it was the character of Lenin, the "primal father," which shaped the party (his followers did call themselves Leninists) rather than the party organization and the environment which shaped Lenin

and the other Bolsheviks. And it was the will of Lenin alone which turned the party's politics, as in the crucial decisions in April and July 1917.

The Bolshevik party has, more than any other party in history, demonstrated the nature of will. It was, and is, one of the most highly self-conscious movements in history. Its patristic writings are not only canonical, they are "training documents" in the tempering of a "hard core" party membership. Individuals may join from a variety of motives, but all must be stamped in the mold or driven out. "The Narodniks," Lenin jibed, "are more united . . . and with them the abundance of grouplets is not accompanied by sharp splits . . . [yet] the Narodniks are politically impotent . . . incapable of carrying through any political mass action . . . [while] the dogmatic 'Marxists' who have an endless number of splits . . . are successfully active." The splits and expulsions (becoming blood purges after power is achieved) which characterize Communist parties may thus be seen as a process of personality selection: the true Bolshevik is the man who remains.

If we can sum up the argument schematically: Bolshevik character is a reaction, consciously and unconsciously, to elements in the Russian intellectual character. This is seen most characteristically in the person of Lenin and his emotional and intellectual temper. In Lenin's mold the party became stamped.*

IV

WITH the Leites study we come full circle in the theories of history and politics. It was the fashion a hundred years ago to ascribe historical change to the "great men" and the force of their personalities. Subsequently we interpreted history in terms of abstract "social forces"—population pressure, search for markets, etc.—which somehow, but never fully understandably, translated themselves through individual actors into tangible events. The glaring inadequacies of these deterministic theories has led to the reintroduction of psychological and, through Freudian influence, characterological

*Leites has elaborated his view in a subsequent volume, *Ritual of Liquidation* (The Free Press, 1954), to explain the Moscow Trials of the late 30's. His view, briefly, is that the old Bolsheviks were caught, psychologically, in the wheel of their own logic, and, being beaten, fatalistically confessed.

explanations. Even ex-Marxists have not been immune. Is not the current fashionable theory of the "primacy of politics" over economic forces simply a smuggled-in psychological theory of "power"? Most attempts to explain the situation in Russia today find expression in the "power" formula.

But actually, the formula of "power" explains little. It tells nothing about different tactics, different social groups, the different purposes for which power will be used. If a psychological theory of politics is to be employed, then the Leites view—with its emphasis on character as blending a power drive with ideology—is, in spite of all its limitations and uncertainties, a far more subtle and imaginative view than the contraband psychology of the political scientists.

However, two questions remain to be asked: how are continuities of character established, and how, and with what difficulties, does an elite group impress its character upon a country?

In the Leites model, as we have seen, there is the implication that the initial change—the emergence of Bolshevism—was a reaction formation, and that the character of the "primal father" determined its political course. If that was true of Lenin, how does it apply to Stalin, and to his heirs? In his study of *Hamlet*, Ernest Jones remarks that there are two kinds of sons: those who reject their fathers, and those who take over and internalize the essential characteristics of the father, often caricaturing his features in the process. From this point of view, Stalin was the son who took over the lineaments of the father. The touches, however, were grosser. Where in Lenin's time it was the party that had the monopoly on foresight, under Stalin it became a group within the party, and eventually the Leader alone, in whom all wisdom resided. Devices once reserved for the enemy—particularly deception and terror—were exercised on the masses which the party claimed to represent, and later against rivals within the party itself. Lenin had opposed personal touchiness and insisted on the irrelevance of personal prestige; Stalinism reacted intensely to minor slights, but only after giving them a political interpretation. Lenin opposed bragging; the Stalinist regime went in for the greatest self-glorification in history. Lenin opposed the creation of "scandals" in the party; Stalin liquidated the party cadres under the most fantastic charges.

These changes in Bolshevik behavior do not necessarily reflect changes in the unconscious

wishes and fears which Leites posits as the ultimate sources of the Bolshevik character. Psychological defense patterns may change—indeed, they often *must* change as older defenses become inadequate. But when such changes take place on a broad political scale, they become extremely important, and we are bound to ask why the changes have occurred, why these particular changes, and what further changes are likely to occur. Here Leites offers little assistance. His theory deals with the dynamics of Bolshevism in the process of its formation, but once Bolshevism has come to birth, the model, as he presents it, is static. Take, for example, the "odd" neglect of Stalin's memory by Malenkov and company. One could say that they, in turn, represent a reaction to the overbearing, almost paranoid Stalin, or because of the peculiar balance of power, they have returned to the "looser" structure of Leninism. But we have no guide in the model itself to the possibility or the nature of the change.

THE static quality of the model comes in part from its methodology. The basic outlines of Bolshevik character are drawn not from the empirical world of action but from the abstract canons of Bolshevik doctrine. In itself this is not too great a fault, since the doctrine itself is evident. The greater fault of the theory—and paradoxically its strength—lies in the fact that, starting from static doctrine, it posits a static force called "character" and then gathers all human action into that one hedgehog force. How often in social action does character or will actually impose itself on events? People live largely in social systems, and they are "chained" to one another in complex ways. All of us, no doubt, would like to impose our "character" on the world, but in practice we find ourselves forced to modify our demands to conform to the possibilities. Leites may thus be claimed to have given his concept of "character" a false autonomy, and in applying this concept to politics—which is *par excellence* a phenomenon of change and interaction—to have falsified the nature of his subject. Again, this objection does not invalidate Leites's analysis; it only points to its necessary limitations. Leites tries to tell us, in short, what the Communists want to do. We need to know also what they *can* do. It may be useful to deal briefly with a few recent books which attempt, from various standpoints, to deal with the question of the limited alternatives open to the Communists.

THERE is a general consensus among Soviet experts that the Stalinist regime went as far as it could go, if it did not overreach itself, in the use of power and terror to keep the society moving, and that the new rulers of Russia face a deep dilemma.

Isaac Deutscher, a pundit favored by some liberal publications, presents a traditional Marxist view. In his books—most explicitly in *Russia, What Next?*—Deutscher sketches a theory of Soviet development based on the proposition that the level of productive power acts as a constraint on the possibilities of action. In a veiled, backhand defense of Stalinist “necessity,” he concludes that with the progress achieved in the 1950’s, the Stalinist terrorism and primitive magic had outlived their “usefulness” and were coming into conflict with the “new needs of Soviet society.” Industrialization, says Deutscher, “tends to awaken the democratic aspirations of the masses,” while the “phenomenal growth of Soviet wealth . . . tends to soften [class privileges], and the orthodoxy, the iron curtain and the elaborate mythology of Stalinism tend to become socially useless. . . . Stalinism is untenable in this expanding society at its present level of productive forces.”

We may, in this context, pass briefly over Deutscher’s blithe optimism. It is highly debatable whether industrialization leads to a striving for freedom, or whether the expansion of wealth tends to diminish class privileges; relative scarcities are bound to exist for a long period in the Soviet Union and the congealing of class privileges may become the real brake on any relaxation of the dictatorship, although key social groups at the top may win a measure of security. As a scheme for analysis, however, there is in Deutscher’s approach a clearly determinable sense (whether substantively right or wrong) of a mainspring of change, and thus it focuses attention on the key question of social theory—the sources of change in social systems.

One need not accept the stilted Marxist notion of “level of productive forces” to know that a society generates different bureaucratic groups (plant managers, state planners and bureaucrats, party controllers, army, secret police, etc.) who have different images of accomplishments, different notions of social priorities, different power drives and opportunities, all of which are bound to generate various antagonisms. Moreover, every society demands, after

a while, a pattern of stable expectations within which careers can be planned, children raised, personal and social defenses and adaptations set up—in short, a sense of a future. Can Soviet society settle down?

Professor Merle Fainsod of Harvard in his *How Russia Is Ruled* (Harvard University Press), focusing on the internal strains, sees two possible choices: a continuation of control from the top down, or else the diffusion of power among rival elites and the gradual emergence of some type of constitutional order. Pessimistic about the ability of the regime to relax controls, Fainsod sees no fundamental changes in the near future.

Professor W. W. Rostow of M.I.T., synthesizing the work of many Russian scholars, comes to a more “optimistic” conclusion in his *The Dynamics of Soviet Society* (Norton). The struggle for succession, he argues, will force the claimants to mobilize popular support from different elite groups, but the lack of a mechanism to adjudicate conflicting dissatisfactions and aspirations may result in political confusion which will hobble, and even topple, the Soviet regime.

THE nature of the limited alternatives is also the subject of Barrington Moore’s excellent book *Terror and Progress* (Harvard University Press). In Soviet society, Moore points out, the range of social alternatives is very limited. In the basic problems of allocations (what is to be produced, how much is to be consumed, what incentives are to be employed) decisions are made by three criteria: power, rationality, tradition. But any one solution limits the range of workable alternatives for the solution of other problems. Thus, rationality emphasizes technical competence as the criterion for employment. But the requirements of power demand that jobs go to the faithful, to the commissar rather than the manager, while purges, the most drastic expression of power, are necessary to remind individuals that obedience is the first law of the Soviet system. Traditionalism, the following of established routine, has been the “natural” mode of the peasantry, if not *sub rosa* of large sections of Soviet industry, and stands as a constant hindrance to the application of the other criteria.

The criteria of power, says Moore, have probably gone too far. In a totalitarian state, the power of the dictator to intervene arbitrarily at any point in the administrative hier-

archy creates a level of insecurity which an ongoing system may find difficult to maintain. The choice now, Moore feels, lies between "creeping rationality" and traditionalism, or some combination of both. Since the Soviet Union is intent on industrialization, the rationalizing elements are likely to become more deeply embodied in the society: this would mean that technical criteria would replace political decisions, jobs would be allocated according to skill, career expectations would have a higher degree of stability, family privileges could be passed on to children. In turn the power and prestige of the industrial manager, the engineer, and the technician would rise, and the share in power and prestige held by the "control" apparatus, the party and secret police, would decline. An alternative—or parallel—evolution of Soviet society in a traditionalist direction, which Moore finds "somewhat more plausible," would mean that the party and military elements would retain control, but arbitrary intervention would diminish as personal cliques and machines within the bureaucracy become the focal point of loyalties. Such a development would also imply a rise in local autonomy and a resistance to innovation and change.

For the Soviet rulers, then, choices are rather narrow. They cannot permit the free play of interests without wrecking the society; "to keep themselves in power they must maintain a delicate balance between . . . security and insecurity, legality and arbitrariness, [and] they must somehow prevent the paralysis of traditionalism by maintaining the same kind of bal-

ance between custom and innovation, routine and initiative."

THERE are, then, other methods than Leites's of trying to predict the behavior of world Communism, both within the Communist countries and in relation to the free world. The singular difference is that these authors (Deutscher, Fainsod, Rostow, Moore) see politics in rational terms, on the basis of rational alternatives. Leites is interested primarily in the emotional components—largely unconscious—of Bolshevistic feeling as a clue to Bolshevik behavior. All these approaches have their validity, though the problem is how to meld them.

But there is one more large variable which these theories, in the nature of things, cannot adequately take into account: the behavior of the free world, which is the most important "reality factor" limiting the freedom of action of the Communist leaders. Here the role of social science becomes characteristically ambiguous, for these volumes are designed to affect the behavior of the free world in its opposition to Communism, but in so doing we risk the danger of self-confirming hypotheses whereby we, because of our judgment of how the Communists may be expected to act, might adopt policies forcing them to confirm or negate that judgment. This is always a danger, but we minimize it if we remember that no matter how far our social science sophistication has come, it cannot take the place of that practical flexibility which is demanded by an awareness of the limitations of our knowledge.